

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Edwards Lifesciences

#### Puerto Rico Manufacturing Extension Inc

#### Edwards Lifesciences Reduces Inventory, Lead Times

**Client Profile:**

Edwards Lifesciences, a California-based manufacturer of catheters, has four locations in Puerto Rico, one of which is in Añasco. The Añasco branch employs 300 people.

**Situation:**

Edwards Lifesciences wanted to reduce inventory, introduce new products, decrease operating costs, and increase customer response. The company was especially concerned about the large amount of work-in-process (WIP) inventory that had built up as a result of delayed response times. Edwards Lifesciences is a client of Puerto Rico Manufacturing Extension, Inc. (PRiMEX), a NIST MEP network affiliate. The company asked PRiMEX to help it develop a way to achieve these goals.

**Solution:**

PRiMEX began by studying Edwards Lifesciences' inventory issue, and recommended a pilot lean project on a selected production line. The company chose its CCO line, which produces two types of catheter, as the pilot area. PRiMEX led company employees through a kaizen event to implement a pull/kanban inventory management system and reduce existing WIP. In the course of the project, Edwards Lifesciences employees reduced line batch requirements from 20 to 5 units for both products. The company continues to improve this line, reducing lead times and building employee lean skills. Edwards Lifesciences has adopted a lean transformation strategy, and plans to implement lean techniques throughout the plant in the near future.

**Results:**

Reduced WIP dollar inventory from \$533,000 to \$266,000.

Reduced number of WIP units from 11,350 to 5,450.

Reduced lead time on one product from 3 days to 1 day.

Working to reduce lead time on second product from 8 days to 2.5 days.

Adopted lean transformation strategy.

Improved employee skills and increased their involvement in the manufacturing process.

**Testimonial:**

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